



**Nathan Deal**  
Governor

**Bobby Cagle, MSW**  
Commissioner

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Zoo Atlanta celebrates 20th Anniversary of Georgia's Pre-K Program**

*Pre-K Week presented by PNC, October 8-12, 2012, includes discount admission for  
Pre-K classes, special shows and activities*

**ATLANTA, Ga., (September 24, 2012)** – Calling all Georgia's Pre-K classes! As an extension of its partnership with Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Zoo Atlanta is offering Pre-K Week presented by PNC from October 8-12, 2012 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Georgia's nationally recognized Pre-K Program that has served approximately 1.5 million children since it began in 1992.

Participate in Zoo Atlanta's Pre-K Week by scheduling a Self-Guided Field Trip at the discounted rate of \$9 per person (one chaperone per every ten students is required and admitted FREE). Enjoy special activities that include Zoo Atlanta's giant panda mascot Zhu Zhu welcoming teachers and students as they arrive in Flamingo Plaza from 9:30 to 11:00 AM; Animal Tales storybook readings in Amy's Tree at 10:00 AM; and a private Wildlife Theater bird show geared toward the Pre-K audience at 11:00 AM.

"We are very appreciative of our partnership with Zoo Atlanta that already offers two Educator Appreciation Days in the fall and spring of each year with free admission for teachers and discounts for their guests," said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. "This special Pre-K Week is icing on the cake...a birthday cake celebrating 20 years of our lottery-funded Pre-K program, recognized as one of the top state programs in the nation. We appreciate PNC making this possible for all of our Georgia's Pre-K classes across the state."

Cagle said many of Georgia's Pre-K classes started as early as August 8, 2012, and continued through the week following Labor Day, September 3, 2012. During the 2010-2011 school year, sixty-six percent of all four-year-olds in Georgia were served by state Pre-K and Head Start, with a statewide Pre-K enrollment of nearly 83,000. More than 84,000 students are expected this year.

All activities are offered daily during Pre-K Week presented by PNC and are included with your Self-Guided Field Trip reservation. Learn more or reserve your spot online at [www.zooatlanta.org](http://www.zooatlanta.org) or by calling Education Reservations at 404.624.WILD.

### **About Zoo Atlanta**

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,500 animals from around the world. A slate of new up-close-and-personal experiences opened in spring 2012: giraffe feeding, permitting guests to hand-feed Earth's tallest living land mammals, and Wild Encounters, three new behind-the-scenes adventures with African elephants, giant pandas and Komodo dragon.

Other highlights include the nation's largest collection of western lowland gorillas, the nation's largest zoological collection of orangutans and a global center of excellence for the care and study of vanishing reptiles and amphibians. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit [zooatlanta.org](http://zooatlanta.org).

### **About Bright from the Start**

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov).